

VISALIA LIBRARY REMODEL AND EXPANSION

LIBRARY PLAN OF SERVICE

**PREPARED BY THE
TULARE COUNTY LIBRARY
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Limited funding, limited staffing, and realistic expectations for timely increased space beyond this project dictate that the library can only address a small percentage of the needs that came out of the assessments. Some of the needs, such as additional branches and highly significant increases in the book collection are unrealistic and not obtainable given our economic situation.

We have chosen to respond to eight of the needs by establishing eight goals that we feel we can excel in meeting, given the completion of our building project. First, establish a viable Career/Job Informational Area in the Visalia Branch. Second, establish a viable Business Informational Area in the Visalia Branch. Third, establish a special Children's area to meet the needs of the community as identified in the community needs assessments that were conducted. Fourth, create a special space for Young Adults that is distinct from the Children's area in order to encourage use of young adult materials and as a way to make them feel more welcome and comfortable. Fifth, enhance the role that Children's services plays in helping children to become highly literate. Sixth, improve our computer-training program and access to our computer lab. Seventh, improve our Literacy Program. Eighth, improve the service level provided to those who speak Spanish. We have already responded to some of the identified needs as we have been able, and will continue to work on them as we can.

The fact that increased staffing is not an option necessitated that the remodel and expansion project be designed in such a way that current-staffing levels could efficiently manage the operation of the library. This is why line of sight was such an importance issue to us as evidenced by the degree to which it is stressed in our building program. As stated, the types of service to be offered at the Visalia library will be expanded, not changed. Our current level of service program has already been implemented and is serving the community.

Adult services include the provision of pleasure reading and informational materials including books, periodicals, books on tape, music CDs, DVDs, and videotapes. We provide reference services in person and via the telephone. Reference services include the use of the Internet and other electronic informational resources. Computer access and computer training are considered a service that is performed outside of the adult services unit however coordination between the two is paramount.

Demographically speaking, Tulare County is a relatively poor county. A large number of our residents have basic life information needs. To serve these needs, we concentrate on having available everyday life books such as materials on gardening, automobile repair, consumer information, medical information, childcare, prenatal care, etc. Our Spanish collection concentrates on the same sort of everyday life needs with a larger emphasis on prenatal care, childcare, and home economics.

The same demographic realities shape our reference services. While we give a full range of reference services and have a well-balanced collection of reference books, the heaviest use of our collection is in the needs of everyday life. A great deal of our reference service lies within the scope of homework assistance for all grades.

Currently, Young Adult services are split between the Adult Service and the Children's Service staffs. With the completion of the building project the responsibility will rest solely with Adult Services. The public desires places in the community that provide safe harbors for young

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adults. It is felt that our current area is not welcoming and comfortable enough for young adults because of its inclusion in the children's area. In addition, the community clearly sees the need for a young adult area in a location that does not interfere with the service provided to the younger children. Our goal, as it relates to the building project is to create a special space for young adults that is distinct from the Children's area to encourage use of young adult materials and as a way to make them feel more welcome and comfortable.

All of our need assessments identified the need to improve services to those in our community that speak Spanish. The most common response was a need for more Spanish materials, but it was also indicated that some Hispanics do not feel comfortable in the library because they feel that they cannot get help. A team consisting of the Children's Librarian, a Reference Librarian, and two or three Spanish speaking Library Assistants will be formed to work with the Spanish speaking community to work toward improving our collection and making the library a more inviting place for our Spanish speakers.

Children's services include the provision of pleasure reading and informational materials including books, periodicals, books on tape, music CDs, DVDs, and videotapes. We provide homework support services in person and via the telephone. Homework support services include traditional print resources, the use of the Internet and other electronic informational resources. In addition, the Visalia Unified School District runs a Homework Center at the Visalia Branch. Computer access and computer training are considered a service that is performed outside of the children's services unit but coordination between the two is paramount.

We are going into our third year of providing adult literacy services as funded through LSTA. Our literacy program also operates two ELLI grants and we have applied for two additional ELLI grants. Though we have an adult literacy program up and successfully running the most recent assessment indicated that some in the community thought that we should start such a program. This indicates that though successful, our current program is not visible enough in the community. The current literacy office is in the same block as the library but is not in the library. Moving the literacy office into the library site will go a long way in meeting some of the concerns voiced by the community.

The proposed project fits perfectly into the overall plan of service for the library jurisdiction. This is primarily due to the fact that the proposed project is for Visalia, which also serves as the headquarters library for the Tulare County Library.

Almost all new services or major changes in services originate from the Visalia Branch. Our branches operate in small communities and due to limitations of dollars, and therefore staff, branches are run by Library Assistant IIs. There is only one individual assigned to each branch the exception of the Dinuba Branch that has two employees. Our plan of service calls for the provision of basic adult and children's services in our branches. These services include circulation, basic homework support, basic reference support, summer reading programs, and various other programs. The branches and their users rely on the Visalia Branch for complicated research and for any services beyond the basic ones. Much of our Visalia Branch traffic comes from non-Visalia residents. Visalia is the largest town in the County and is seen as the shopping and services center of the County by a large majority of our residents. They come to Visalia to shop, work, and for other activities. In the course of their visit, they often use the Visalia Branch.

Library technology revolves around five areas: Library Webpage, Library Intranet, on site customer services, at home customer services, and computer instruction. Each branch of these activities works in coordination to provide expanded access to the Visalia community.

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE TULARE COUNTY LIBRARY

The Tulare County Library strives to enrich the lives of all users by meeting the informational, recreational, self-educational, basic literacy, and cultural needs of the community in a welcoming atmosphere. Through a trained, service-oriented staff, we provide organized collections of current-interest materials and access to additional resources through participation in cooperative library systems. We endeavor to fulfill our commitment to the future by providing stimulating materials, technology based instruction and resources, and programs that encourage lifelong learning for all.¹

¹ Official Tulare County Library Mission Statement as it appears in the 2002/2003 Fiscal Year Preliminary Budget—pending the approval of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The assessments we conducted revealed a myriad of needs. Limited funding, limited staffing, and realistic expectations for timely increased space beyond this project dictate that the library can only address a small percentage of the needs that came out of the assessments. Some of the needs such as additional branches and highly significant increases in the book collection are unrealistic and not obtainable given our economic situation.

We have chosen to respond to eight of the needs by establishing eight goals that we feel we can excel in meeting, given the completion of our building project. The goals we have chosen to work toward accomplishing are: the establishment of a Career/Job Information Area, the establishment of a Business Information Area, the establishment of a new Children's area to meet multiple needs, the creation of a special space for Young Adults, playing a bigger role in the advancement of children's literacy, improving our computer training program, improving our adult literacy program, and improving our services to the Hispanic speaking community.

We have already reacted to some of the identified needs as we have been able, and will continue to work on them as we can. For example, we did not have a Literacy Program at the time the first assessment was held. We have established the program, with state funding, and intensified our Adult Literacy public awareness campaign. The library has improved the quality of our Spanish Collection, made some improvements in giving special space to the users of the Spanish Collection.

Goal 1: Establish a viable Career/Job Informational Area in the Visalia Branch. This goal comes directly from the Community Needs Assessment conducted in 1999. Current space restrictions keep this goal from being accomplished. The completion of the proposed building project will allow for this new service to be implemented.

Objective: Provide a space of no less than 150 square feet for a Career/Job Informational Area in the Visalia Branch.

Objective: Form a Community Advisory Committee made up of members of the Downtown Association, the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, members of organizations that conduct job training, and other interested parties to help finalize

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informational needs, potential sources, computer related needs, and suggested signage.

Objective: Form a partnership with the Visalia Chamber of Commerce to combine materials, access to materials, and create a marketing campaign.

Objective: Form a partnership with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to help identify needs, create a plan to disseminate information, and create a marketing campaign.

Objective: Work with the Visalia/Tulare County Library Foundation to raise money to support the new Career/Job Informational Area.

Objective: Spend an initial \$10,000 to provide material for the area.

Objective: Create a training program for the staff on the use and operation of the area.

Objective: Train the staff on the use of the operation of the area.

Objective: Create use indicators to help track the use of the area.

Objective: Meet with the Advisory Group and our partners to discuss the progress of the new area and gather input for potential changes in the operation of the area.

Goal 2: Establish a viable Business Informational Area in the Visalia Branch. This goal comes directly from the community needs assessment conducted in 1999. Current space restrictions keep this goal from being accomplished. The completion of the proposed building project will allow for this new service to be implemented.

Objective: Provide a space of no less than 150 square feet for a Business Informational Area in the Visalia Branch.

Objective: Form a Community Advisory Committee made up of members of the Downtown Association, the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and other interested parties to help finalize informational needs, potential sources, computer related needs, and suggested signage.

Objective: Form a partnership with the Visalia Chamber of Commerce to combine materials, access to materials, and create a marketing campaign.

- Objective: Form a partnership with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to help identify needs, create a plan to disseminate information, and create a marketing campaign.
- Objective: Work with the Visalia/Tulare County Library Foundation to raise money to support the new Business Informational Area.
- Objective: Spend an initial \$15,000 to provide material for the area.
- Objective: Create a training program for the staff on the use and operation of the area.
- Objective: Train the staff on the use of the operation of the area.
- Objective: Create use indicators to help track the use of the area.
- Objective: Meet with the Advisory Group and our partners to discuss the progress of the new area and gather input for potential changes in the operation of the area.

Goal 3: Establish a special children's area to meet the needs of the community as identified in the Community Needs Assessments that were conducted. The need for a refurbished and larger children's area was a theme that ran throughout the assessments. This is also meeting a community need that was not identified as belonging specifically to the library. The community is very concerned about the overall educational level and safety of the children. They want safe places for the children to go and want improved educational opportunities, period. The completion of the proposed building project is necessary for the changes identified in the need assessment to take place.

- Objective: Create a storytelling area that will allow the children to make noise while not negatively affecting the level of service we provide our adult customers.
- Objective: Establish a better line of sight from the Children's area with the Circulation Desk in order to improve the safety and security of our young customers
- Objective: Establish a Children's area that will create a better safe zone away from some of our adult customers who may seem to be intimidating to the youngsters.
- Objective: Increase the number of annual children's programs by 25%.

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- Objective: Create areas within the Children's area that are special to various age groups.
- Objective: Increase the shelving capacity for children's books by at least 15%???????????
- Objective: Create a Children's area so that the staff assigned to the area have more immediate access to that area from their office and non public-desk work locations.
- Objective: Have bathrooms specifically designed for children.
- Objective: Establish an area that can consistently available for the Homework Center run by the Visalia Unified School District.

Goal 4: Create a special space for Young Adults that is distinct from the Children's area to encourage use of young adult materials and as a way to make them feel more welcome and comfortable. This need was also made apparent in the needs assessment. It came out as a need to have the young adult area in a location that it did not interfere with the service provided to the younger children and also as a safety issue for the younger children. Current space limitations and proper safety and crowd control management factors are not feasible within the confines of our current space.

- Objective: Create a comfortable, colorful pleasure reading area for young adults in the adult area of the new building.
- Objective: Locate the Young Adult area in a location close to other service areas that are of interest to young adults or that are typically used by young adults.
- Objective: Create a teen council.
- Objective: Hold three Young Adult programs the first year.

Goal 5: Enhance the role that Children's services plays in helping children to become highly literate. The high illiteracy rate in the County was a common concern as indicated in our need assessments for both adults and children. The emphasis on children, outside of the school arena, revolved around exposure and availability. To this end the library plans to improve Children's services and to make our Children's services area more appealing and secure.

- Objective: Train 3 additional staff members to work with our young customers.

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- Objective: Increase the number of pre school programs by 10%.
- Objective: Work with Visalia Unified to piggyback on the author visits they provide - have four children's authors visit the library yearly.
- Objective: Work with the schools to solicit an increase in school visitations by 20%.
- Objective: Train staff on strict weeding standards to ensure collection is updated and attractive.
- Objective: Work with the Friends to increase the exposure of the "Adopt a Book Program".

Goal 6: Improve our computer-training program and access to our computer lab. Access to computers and the availability of computers was a concern identified in the community assessment. In particular, computer training is a concern we see from our more mature adults.

- Objective: Create a computer-training lab. Our current computer lab is extremely popular. Our computer classes are also popular, and we have waiting lists for most classes. The problem is that when we hold our computer classes we have to shut down the computer lab for general public use. A second lab used exclusively for training purposes will allow us to increase the number of training sessions and at the same time allow us to increase the availability of computers for general public use.
- Objective: Put the computer lab in a location that is more visible, more inviting, and more easily managed by library staff by improving the line of sight.
- Objective: Form partnerships with community groups to identify training needs, the audiences desiring training, and trainers who can supplement our current services.

Goal 7: Improve our Literacy Program. Adult literacy was also singled out as a need. Some of the input suggested that we start a literacy program. This indicates that though successful, our current program is not visible enough in the community. We also got significant input to improve our current program by enlarging the space made available to the program and to do a better job at making non-literacy library staff knowledgeable and more supportive of the program. The current

literacy office is in the same block as the library but is not in the library.

Objective: Bring the literacy operation into the library. This will introduce the adult students to the library in a non-threatening secure atmosphere. It will also allow the volunteers easier access to the library for tutoring purposes.

Objective: Teach the tutors about the library and how they can help their students reach their goals through library use.

Objective: Put together a packet of information for the Tutors to use in helping their students reach their goals by using the library.

Objective: Double the number of public relations pieces that we are putting out and continue to monitor the success of each piece.

Goal 8: Improve the service level provided to those who speak Spanish. This need was identified in all of our surveys in one way or the other. A need for more Spanish materials was the most common response, but it was also indicated that some Hispanics do not feel comfortable in the library because they feel that they cannot get help.

Objective: Put up signage indicating that we have a number staff fluent in Spanish who are happy to give assistance.

Objective: Work closely with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and other Hispanic oriented groups to better our services through materials selection, signage, creating a marketing plan, etc.

Objective: Create a more welcoming atmosphere by giving the Spanish Collection different special places that is both visible and inviting to the general Spanish Speaking population in both the adult and juvenile areas. We have made improvements in this regard already but do not have enough flexibility in our confined space to adequately fulfill this need.

Objective: Hire more qualified employees who are fluent in Spanish.

VISALIA LIBRARY SERVICES

The purpose of the Visalia Library Remodel and Expansion project is primarily to increase the size of our woefully undersized service area to allow us to better serve our library community. The size of the expansion is driven by three factors. Those three factors are available local funding for capital improvements, the incorporation of the historic library building into the public service area of the library, and current staffing levels. The first factor is evident. The second factor will be discussed in the Building Program. The third factor is ultimately of prime importance to the plan of service.

STAFFING

The fact that increased staffing is not an option necessitated that the remodel and expansion project be designed in such a way that current-staffing levels could efficiently manage the operation of the library. This is why line of sight was such an important issue to us as evidenced by the degree to which it is stressed in our building program. By current staffing levels we are referring to new current staffing levels. Anticipating the expanded library and the need to increase our quality of service we recently reorganized our staff by promoting five Office Assistants to Library Assistants. This gives us the flexibility to put more staff hours into direct public service. This, in turn, allows us to operate an expanded facility and to enhance/expand those services that we have identified to meet our goals and objectives as they relate to the building project and how the project meets the needs of the community as identified in the need assessments.

As stated, the types of service to be offered at the Visalia library will be expanded not changed. Our current level of service program has already been implemented and is serving the community.

Total Staff that will be assigned to the Visalia Branch (not including the Literacy Program Staff):

5 FTE	Librarians
12.3 FTE	Library Assistant IIs
1 FTE	Library Assistant III
1.3 FTE	Student Shelves
1 FTE	Volunteer Coordinator

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The Circulation/Automation Systems Coordinator and the Deputy County Librarian will spend approximately 50% and 40% respectively of their time on matters dealing with the Visalia Branch.

The following breakdown represents a detailed description of how staff resources will be allocated:

Librarian:	4.5 FTE Librarians will be assigned to the Reference Department and to selecting adult and young adult materials. .5FTE Librarian will be assigned to the Children's Department.
Library Assistant II:	11.3 FTE Library Assistant IIs will be assigned to the Circulation Department. Besides coverage of the circulation desk ,they will also cover the Computer Room and assist in Computer Training Classes. In addition, these Library Assistants will cover the Children's Desk and help with programming to the extent necessary. 1 FTE Library Assistant II will be assigned to the Children's department full time.
Library Assistant III:	1 FTE Library Assistant III will be assigned to the Visalia Branch. This individual will be in charge of the circulation department and coverage of the computer room.
Student Shelves:	The 1.3 FTE Student Shelves will be doing the majority of the shelving from September through May. From June through August special summer student employees perform this task.
Volunteer Coordinator:	The 1 FTE Volunteer Coordinator will be recruiting, training, and coordinating our volunteer corps. Volunteer will help in a myriad of ways including the staffing of a Directional Desk during very busy times. Amongst other things, the volunteers shelve, repair books, and help with programming.
Circulation/Automation Systems Coordinator:	1 FTE Circulation/Automation Systems Coordinator will coordinate circulation services throughout the system including Visalia. In addition, this individual will be in charge of the daily operation of our public access computers including public training.

Deputy County Librarian: Approximately 50% of this individual's time will be spent working in or for the Visalia Branch. 1 FTE Deputy County Librarian will be in charge of managing the Visalia Branch. Approximately 40% of this individual's time will be spent with direct management of the Visalia Branch. Another 20% of this individual's time will be spent on policy and procedure formation and implementation that also affect the Visalia Branch.

Literacy Program Staff will be moved from their current location in a building on the current block but outside of the library to the renovated 1936 building. Staff will also utilize the current location for meetings, limited training, and other activities. Literacy Staff will consist of:

Literacy Coordinator
Administrative Aid
Office Assistant III

HOURS OF OPERATION

Visalia Branch Hours of Operation: The Visalia Branch Library is currently open 46 hours weekly. This number will not change as a result of this remodeling project. At the present time, there is no anticipation that increased funding for staff will be available. The Visalia Branch currently maintains four public service desks; all four of these service desks will be staffed and available for the public during all operational hours. We will continue to hold class visits, programs, and other special activities outside of our normal public service hours as staffing permits. Our current hours are:

Monday – Thursday 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Saturday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Literacy Hours of Operation: Literacy office service hours are different than normal library hours to accommodate the scheduling needs of the tutors and the learners. The renovated building will be designed in such a way that tutors and learners will have access to the offices and training areas in the library even when the library is not otherwise open to the public.

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Monday - Friday	Office Hours—9 a.m. - 5:30 a.m. Tutoring Hours—9 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Saturday	Tutoring Hours—11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

ADULT SERVICES

Adult services include the provision of pleasure reading and informational materials including books, periodicals, books on tape, music CDs, DVDs, and videotapes. We provide reference services in person and via the telephone. Reference services include the use of traditional print, the Internet and other electronic informational resources. Computer access and computer training are considered a service that is performed outside of the adult services unit but coordination between the two is paramount.

Description of Current Service

Demographically speaking, Tulare County is a relatively poor county. A large number of our residents need basic life information needs. To serve these needs we concentrate on having available everyday life books such as materials on gardening, automobile repair, consumer information, medical information, childcare, prenatal care, etc. Our Spanish collection concentrates on the same sort of everyday life needs with a larger emphasis on prenatal care, childcare, and home economics.

The same demographic realities shape our reference services. While we give a full range of reference services and have a well-balanced collection of reference books, the use is heaviest in the everyday life need area. A great deal of our reference service lies within the scope of homework assistance for all grades. Though our community demands and receives help for adult re-entry students on a college level, the majority of our reference service is spent helping junior high and high school students with their assignments and study needs. Our circulating book collection also reflects this as one of our concentrations in purchasing materials on the young adult level that are designed to help meet their homework assignments and school study needs.

Our adult programming is done in sponsorship with the Friends of the Library who usually sponsor, and sometimes arrange ,the programs. We try to have programs that revolve around literature but have had programs dealing with interesting

characters from California's history. At times our programs are co-sponsored by community groups such as the Farm Bureau or the Hispanic Women's League.

The Reference staff also is in charge of the local History Room. Volunteers staff this room, but Reference Librarians help customers in the room when Volunteers are not available with one of the Librarians being the lead worker and coordinator.

The Fiction Collection is, as with most public libraries, slanted toward recreational reading. Staff works to maintain a balanced collection, while meeting the popular needs of the reading public. Priority is given to popular bestsellers, with this area being augmented through the use of a rental collection. Special developmental collections include mysteries, romance, westerns, and science fiction.

Planned Expanded Services that Revolve Around the Building Project

The information on collections as stated above will continue to hold true unless there is a major demographic shift in Visalia. What the building project will allow us to do is expand the collections of our under-served populations. Specifically, this remodel will provide sufficient space to make the Spanish and Young Adult collections more prominent and marketable. We will also create new collections, as mentioned below.

Programming: We plan to increase our Adult and Young Adult programming. A Librarian will be assigned the duty of working with the Friends of the Library and other community groups to come up with programs that will benefit the community and bring further attention to the library.

Career/Job Informational Area: Our need assessments clearly indicates that the community needs and desires help in all aspects of job training, job advancements, obtaining work, etc. We will be establishing a special section in the library that is dedicated to providing information on careers and all aspects of work. This new Career/Job Informational Area will be visible and welcoming. It will be assigned space within the Reference Service area. One of our Reference Librarians will be given the assignment of building the collection and making contacts with the business community, entities that provide job training and guidance, and civic groups as indicated in the section on objectives. S/he will work directly with the Deputy County Librarian on most aspects of this assignment but report directly to the Head of Reference when appropriate. While one Librarian will be assigned to coordinate this new service all Librarians will be trained on how to use the

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materials and how to assist the customers. In addition, all Library Assistants will be aware of what the Area has to offer for referral purposes. We will continue working with the Chamber of Commerce in this regard and we have already made contact with WID to provide special software that will aid the library in referring our customers to different agencies that can be of further and more detailed help to them. The following list of objectives also is a list of implementation steps that will be taken to help us meet our goal.

- Objective: Prepare the space set aside for the Career/Job Informational Area.
- Objective: Form a Community Advisory Committee made up of members of the Downtown Association, the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, members of organizations that conduct job training, and other interested parties to help finalize informational needs, potential sources, computer related needs, and suggested signage.
- Objective: Continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce to combine materials, access to materials, and create a marketing campaign.
- Objective: Form a partnership with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to help identify needs, create a plan to disseminate information, and create a marketing campaign.
- Objective: Work with the Visalia/Tulare County Library Foundation to raise money to support the new Career/Job Informational Area.
- Objective: Spend an initial \$10,000 to provide material for the area.
- Objective: Create a training program for the staff on the use and operation of the area.
- Objective: Provide ongoing training for staff on the use and operation of the area.
- Objective: Create use indicators to help track the use of the area.
- Objective: Meet with the Advisory Group and our partners to discuss the progress of the new area and gather input for potential changes in the operation of the area.

Business Information Area: The Visalia community has indicated through our need assessments that there is a need to help establish local businesses and in

helping established businesses thrive and improve. Our response is to establish a special section in the library that is dedicated to providing information for business needs.

This new Business Information Area will be visible and welcoming. It will be assigned space within the Reference Service Area. One of our Reference Librarians will be given the assignment of building the collection and making contacts with the business community, Chambers of Commerce, and civic groups as indicated in the section on objectives. S/he will work directly with the Deputy County Librarian on most aspects of this assignment but report directly to the Head of Reference when appropriate. While one Librarian will be assigned to coordinate this new service, all Librarians will be trained on how to use the materials and how to assist the customers. In addition, all Library Assistants will be aware of what the Area has to offer for referral purposes. The following list of objectives also is a list of implementation steps that will be taken to help us meet our goal.

- Objective: Provide a space for a Business Information Area in the Visalia Branch.
- Objective: Form a Community Advisory Committee made up of members of the Downtown Association, the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and other interested parties to help finalize informational needs, potential sources, computer related needs, and suggested signage.
- Objective: Form a partnership with the Visalia Chamber of Commerce to combine materials, access to materials, and create a marketing campaign.
- Objective: Form a partnership with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to help identify needs, create a plan to disseminate information, and create a marketing campaign.
- Objective: Work with the Visalia/Tulare County Library Foundation to raise money to support the new Business Information Area.
- Objective: Spend an initial \$15,000 to provide material for the area.
- Objective: Create a training program for the staff on the use and operation of the area.
- Objective: Train the staff on the use of the operation of the area.
- Objective: Create use indicators to help track the use of the area.

Objective: Meet with the Advisory Group and our partners to discuss the progress of the new area and gather input for potential changes in the operation of the area.

Special Space for Young Adults

Currently the responsibility for the services that are provided to Young Adults are split between the Adult Service and the Children's Service staffs. With the completion of the building project, the responsibility will rest solely with Adult Services. The public desires places in the community that provide safe harbors for young adults. It is felt that our current area is not welcoming and comfortable enough for young adults because of its inclusion in the children's area. In addition, the community clearly sees the need for a Young Adult area in a location that does not interfere with the service provided to the younger children. Our goal as it relates to the building project is to create a special space for young adults that is distinct from the Children's area to encourage use of Young Adult materials and as a way to make them feel more welcome and comfortable. The Young Adult area will be located in the current building in an area that has a sight line to the Reference Desk and to the Computer Room Station. Besides the Young Adult area being close to the Computer Room, special computers will be placed in the area for young adult use. Comfortable and colorful seating will be available for pleasure reading purposes, as will be the Young Adult Fiction and periodical collection. The following list of objectives also is a list of implementation steps that will be taken to help us meet our goal.

Objective: Create a comfortable, colorful pleasure reading area for young adults in the Adult Area of the new building.

Objective: Locate the Young Adult Area in a location close to other service areas that are of interest to young adults or that are typically used by young adults.

Objective: Create a teen council.

Objective: Hold three Young Adult programs the first year.

Improve Services to our Spanish Speaking Population

All of our need assessments identified the need to improve services to those in our community that speak Spanish. The was the most common response was a need for more Spanish materials, but it was also indicated that some Hispanics do not feel

comfortable in the library because they feel that they cannot get help. A Team consisting of the Children's Librarian, a Reference Librarian, and two or three Spanish speaking Library Assistants will be formed to work with the Spanish speaking community to work towards improving our collection and making the library a more inviting place for our Spanish speakers. The team will report directly to the Deputy County Librarian and work toward accomplishing the following list of objectives which is also a list of implementation steps that will be taken to help us meet our goal.

- Objective: Put up signage indicating that we have a number staff fluent in Spanish who are happy to give assistance.
- Objective: Work closely with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and other Hispanic oriented groups to improve our services through materials selection, signage, creating a marketing plan, etc.
- Objective: Create a more welcoming atmosphere by giving the Spanish Collection different special places that are both visible and inviting to the general Spanish Speaking population in both the adult and juvenile areas. We have made improvements in this regard already but do not have enough flexibility in our confined space to adequately succeed in this objective.
- Objective: Hire more qualified employees who are fluent in Spanish

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Children's services include the provision of pleasure reading and informational materials including books, periodicals, books on tape, music CDs, DVDs, and videotapes. We provide homework support services in person and via the telephone. Homework support services include the use of traditional print material, the Internet and other electronic informational resources. In addition, the Visalia Unified School District runs a Homework Center at the Visalia Branch. Computer access and computer training are considered a service that is performed outside of the children's services unit but coordination between the two is paramount.

Our book collection is broken down into Picture Books, Easy Readers, Fiction, and Non-Fiction. The library puts a lot of money into their Picture Book and Easy Reader Collections because of our communities need to inspire children to become readers and to help them with their early learning process. Fiction is purchased at

all grade levels with special care to have books that are popular with boys and girls of an English speaking but high minority concentration. Non-Fiction Books are purchased largely to support the homework needs of the students living in our area. Due to the fact Tulare County is a relatively poor county and has a high illiteracy rate we take special care to also purchase books that are of interest to children but can also be used by the children to help in the home with everyday life needs.

Our Children's Programming consist of pre-school story times that run 8 months of the year, a new evening story time for all age groups that will run 8 months out of the year, a summer reading program, and various special programs throughout the year celebrating holidays, events, and individuals famous birthdays. The Friends of the Library who help with crowd control and provide money for treats, special performers, handouts, and promotions support our programs. We work with business and service clubs to provide special programs throughout the year that promote reading.

Planned Expanded Services that Revolve Around the Building Project

The information on collections as stated previously will continue to hold true unless there is a major demographic shift in Visalia. What the building project will allow us to do, in terms of the above description, is expand the collections, make the Spanish collection more prominent and marketable, and increase the number of programs we provide.

Special Children's Area: The community assessments clearly identified the need for a refurbished and larger Children's Area. The main library specific concerns were that the children need a space where they can be kids and make noise during programs without disturbing adult patronage and the need for additional Children's Programs. The noise factor is especially a problem in the summer when we actually loose adult patronage due to the loud volume coming from the Children's area. The assessments also identified a community need that does not belong specifically to the library. The community is very concerned about the overall educational level and safety of the children. They want safe places for the Children to go and want improved educational opportunities period. Another needs mentioned by the community were the need to make the homework center more visible and give them a space that would give them more consistent hours.

The building program itself takes care of many of these concerns. The architect, building committee, staff, Deputy County Librarian, and County Librarian have all

taken part in the design of the use space to meet the needs as mentioned. The Children's Librarian and his/her staff will be responsible to work with the school district, pre-schools, Friends of the Library, and other community groups in establishing a new and expanded programming schedule. The Children's Librarian will work directly with the County Librarian, a Children's Librarian in the past, in the above regard. The Library Assistant III in charge of the Library Assistant IIs will work with the Children's Librarian to establish a schedule whereby the Library Assistants will be available to help with, and at times conduct story programs and class visitations. Appropriate training will be designed and implemented by the Children's Staff with input from the County Librarian. The following list of objectives is also a list of implementation steps that will be taken to help us meet our goal.

- Objective: Create a storytelling area that will allow the children to make noise while not negatively affecting the level of service we provide our adult customers.
- Objective: Establish a better line of sight from the Children's area with the Circulation Desk in order to improve the safety and security of our young customers
- Objective: Establish a Children's area that will create a better safe zone away from some of our adult customers who may seem to be intimidating to the youngsters.
- Objective: Increase the number of annual children's programs by 25%.
- Objective: Create areas within the Children's area that are special to various age groups.
- Objective: Increase the shelving capacity for children's books by at least 15%????????????
- Objective: Create a Children's Area so that the staff assigned to the area have more immediate access to that area from their office and non public-desk work locations.
- Objective: Have bathrooms specifically designed for children.
- Objective: Establish an area that can consistently be available for use by the Homework Center run by the Visalia Unified School District

Children's Literacy: The high illiteracy rate in the County was a common concern as indicated in our need assessments for both adults and children. The community feels the need for children to receive encouragement to read outside of

the school arena. They feel that the children in Visalia need more exposure to and have more availability to develop the love and excitement of reading. To this end, the library plans to increase our storytelling programs and to also improve the quality of our Children's Services and to make our Children's Services area more appealing and secure. The Children's staff will be responsible for implementation of this goal with help from the Deputy County Librarian and the Library Assistant III for training the staff. This goal shares some of the same implementation objectives as stated in the "Special Children's Area" as previously indicated. These objectives will not be repeated in this section because they are apparent and will be implemented as the means to accomplish the above goal. The below objectives are a list of implementation steps that will be taken to help us meet our goal.

- Objective: Train 3 additional staff members to work with our young customers.
- Objective: Increase the number of pre school programs by 10%.
- Objective: Work with Visalia Unified to piggyback on the author visits they provide - have four children's authors visit the library yearly.
- Objective: Work with the schools to solicit an increase in school visitations by 20%.
- Objective: Train staff on strict weeding standards to ensure collection is updated and attractive.
- Objective: Work with the Friends to increase the exposure of the "Adopt a Book Program".

LITERACY SERVICES

Adult literacy was also singled out as a need. We are going into our third year of providing adult literacy services as funded through LSTA. Our literacy program also operates two ELLI grants and we have applied for two additional ELLI grants. We are very happy of our progress to this point. Though we have an adult literacy program up and successfully running the most recent assessment indicated that some in the community thought that we should start such a program. This indicates that though successful, our current program is not visible enough in the community. We also got significant input to improve our current program by enlarging the space made available to the program and to do a better job at making non-literacy library staff knowledgeable and more supportive of the program. The current literacy office is in the same block as the library but is not in the library. Moving the literacy office inside the library will go a long way in meeting some of

the concerns voiced by the community. The actual implementation will be the responsibility of the Literacy Coordinator and his/her staff. The Literacy Coordinator will work through a committee of tutors and learners to in turn work with the Reference Librarian assigned to the goal of providing pertinent information of how the library can aid in the goals set by each tutor and learner. The following list of objectives are also implementation steps.

- Objective: Bring the literacy operation into the library. This will introduce the adult students to the library in a non-threatening, secure atmosphere. It will also allow the volunteers easier access to the library for tutoring purposes.
- Objective: Teach the tutors about the library and how they can help their students reach their goals through library use.
- Objective: Put together a packet of information for the tutors to use in helping their students reach their goals by using the library.
- Objective: Double the number of public relations pieces that we are putting out and continue to monitor the success of each piece.

OTHER SERVICES

Though not mentioned in the need assessments our Volunteer program and our Circulation services will also be greatly improved because of the building program. This will allow us to serve the public better in many arenas. The result is therefore; help and aid in implementing the changes and improvements as listed above.

Volunteers: Our volunteer workspace will be enlarged through the program,, which will allow them to be more organized and work more efficiently. This will allow volunteers to spend more time on important matters such as helping with programming efforts.

Circulation: Smoother operation or our Circulation Services is the backbone of all our planned improvements. While not a part of specific needs as identified by the community, more room and better space for Circulation Services will improve all of our services. There will be easier access to Adult and Children's Services through easier directives given from the Circulation area. The line of sight between the Circulation desk and the other service desks will be dramatically improved for

better crowd control. The new Circulation Area will make the work done by the circulation staff more efficient because of a more central location. This will improve morale and give staff more time to help with other essential services as needed.

COUNTYWIDE LIBRARY SERVICES

The proposed project fits perfectly into the overall plan of service for the library jurisdiction. This is primarily due to the fact that the proposed project is for Visalia, which also serves as the headquarters library for the Tulare County Library.

Almost all new services or major changes in services originate from the Visalia Branch. Our branches operate in small communities and due to limitations of dollars, and therefore staff, branches are run by Library Assistant IIs. There is only one individual assigned to each branch, with the exception of the Dinuba Branch that has two employees. Our plan of service calls for the improved provision of basic adult and children's services in our branches. These services include circulation, basic homework support, basic reference support, summer reading programs, and other programs. The branches and their users rely on the Visalia Branch for complicated research and for any services beyond the basic ones. Therefore, new services or improved service provision plans are implemented in Visalia and then taken out to the branches if implementation in said branches is viable. Improvements in service levels at Visalia are passed on to our branch customers through our communication and request network system. Much of our Visalia Branch traffic comes from non-Visalia residents. Visalia is the largest town in the County and is seen as the shopping and services center of the County by a large majority of our residents. They come to Visalia to shop, get building permits, work, apply for work, etc. In the course of their visit, they often use the Visalia Branch. Any higher level of service offered in Visalia is, therefore, available to non-Visalia residents who use the Visalia Branch.

TECHNOLOGY

It is impossible to discuss the implementation and operation of technology at the Visalia Branch without discussing the greater needs of Tulare County at large. This discussion of services will revolve around five areas: Library Webpage, Library Intranet, on site customer services, at home customer services, and computer instruction.

Most of the branches of the Tulare County Library system received Internet ready PCs through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in the spring of 2000. There are now at least two public access PCs in every branch of the county, with the largest concentration at Visalia.

In addition, the Gates Foundation provided the Visalia Branch with a public access computer lab. This lab is used for three purposes. First, the lab provides public access to the Internet and software. Second, the lab is used to teach instructional classes for the community at large. Third, it also serves as an instructional lab for library staff.

The Visalia Branch also serves as the primary support unit for library computer services throughout the county.

Library Webpage

The Library Webpage is used to provide basic information on library operations and service. We also use the webpage to provide access to special resources for our customers. It is hoped that as the webpage becomes more sophisticated, we will be able to provide expanded patron access to many services.

Library Intranet

The Tulare County Library Intranet was made possible through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. At present, we use the Intranet to provide expanded links, access to on site library resources, and as a testing ground for other services.

The Intranet is also used to provide a shared common platform for all branches of the Tulare County Library. This means that customers who use multiple branches

within the system will see a common, familiar interface, especially when using Internet resources.

In Library Customer Services

Providing access to specialized Internet resources is expensive. Many subscription and indexing services are beyond the resources of the Tulare County Library. What services we are able to provide are heavily supplemented through shared resources with the San Joaquin Valley Library System and the Heartland Region of the Library of California. Nevertheless, the Tulare County Library is committed to expanding these services as finances permit.

At present the library staff has access to InfoTrac, Ref USA, and Title Source II from Baker and Taylor. Some of these sources are also available to our customers in the library. Access is controlled primarily by cost. Any resources we can afford, we provide to the public.

At Home Customer Services

At present, patrons of the Tulare County Library can access limited resources through the Tulare County Library webpage. Descriptions of services, access to some digitized historical materials (primarily photographs), and access to the library catalog are the primary features. The Library fully intends to expand these resources as time and money permits.

Providing access to databases available through the Internet is expensive. Many subscription and indexing services are beyond the resources of the Tulare County Library. Providing remote access outside the library is even more costly, as most vendors require additional security and/or fees to allow access outside the library. At present, we are able to provide customers with access to InfoTrac and the library catalog from their homes.

What services we will be able to add in the future will be heavily dependent upon shared resources with the San Joaquin Valley Library System and the Heartland Region of the Library of California. By sharing resources within a consortium we are able to not only add services, but also provide a consistent level of access for customers throughout our region. The Tulare County Library is committed to expanding these services as finances permit.

Computer Instruction

Access to computers and the availability of computers was a concern identified in the community assessment. These concerns included access to information databases for the traditional underserved in the community, computer training for the traditional underserved in the community, computer training for Spanish speakers, and computer training for seniors. Concern for computer training for our more mature adults was especially strong.

Beginning in the spring of 2001, the Tulare County Library began offering public instructional classes in the Visalia Computer Lab. Course topics have included: Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Introduction to the Internet, PCs For Beginners, PCs For Seniors, and the Internet For Parents. Many of these classes have also been offered in Spanish.

Presently, the Visalia Branch is only able to offer two or three classes per week. This restriction is primarily due to the availability of the computer lab. Both the popularity of the lab and the classes makes it impossible to keep both groups of customers satisfied, as the lab must be closed to public access during instruction. Consequently, the Library is working toward establishing a second computer lab for instructional purposes. It is hoped this lab will be in operation by the fall of 2002. With the implementation of this second lab, we hope to expand public instruction in Visalia.

The Circulation/Automation Systems Coordinator will be responsible for setting up the new computer lab and for setting forth a computer training schedule that will include the above training needs. This individual, who will report directly to the Deputy County Librarian, will also be responsible for accomplishing the following list of objectives, which is also a list of implementation steps that will be taken to help us meet our goal.

Objective: Create a computer-training lab. Our current computer lab is extremely popular. Our computer classes are also popular and we have waiting lists for most classes. The problem is that when we hold our computer classes we have to shut down the computer lab for general public use. A second lab used exclusively for training purposes will allow us to increase the number of training sessions

and at the same time allow us to increase the availability of computers for general public use.

Objective: Put the computer lab in a location that is more visible, more inviting, and more easily managed by library staff by improving the line of sight.

Objective: Form partnerships with community groups to identify training needs, training audiences, and trainers who can supplement our current services.

Objective: Expand computer instruction beyond the Visalia Branch to other county branch libraries through the use of trained Visalia Branch staff.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF TECHNOLOGY

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